

THE  
**Calhoun**  
SCHOOL

New York, New York

Head of School

**Introduction**

---

The Calhoun School is a coeducational independent day school serving approximately 750 students from preschool through twelfth grade on two campuses in Manhattan's Upper West Side. A national leader in progressive education, the school engages children's natural curiosity and empowers them through real-world learning experiences that challenge students to discover, to think critically, and to solve problems. Students learn by doing and actively construct knowledge and understanding in a dynamic environment that encourages intellectual risk taking. Calhoun is a joyful, humanistic, and diverse community that celebrates the individuality and contributions of all of its members; at the same time, an ethos of high expectations unites students and adults alike in pursuit of educational excellence. As a private school with a public purpose, the school views fostering students' sense of equity, justice and accountability within the world to be a central component of its mission. Calhoun students are intelligent, compassionate, curious, and engaged in and outside of the classroom, and as a result, graduates are well prepared for success in college and graduate school and, most importantly, carry with them a love of learning that lasts a lifetime.

**MISSION**

**Calhoun inspires a passion for learning through a progressive approach to education that values intellectual pursuit, creativity, diversity and community involvement.**

**Progressive Approach**

---

**Relationships and Collaboration.** At Calhoun, children and adults work closely with each other and share the excitement of learning together. Teaching and learning begin with the strengths, needs, and diverse life experiences of the individual student. Faculty members are also encouraged to bring their own passions and interests into their classrooms. Small class sizes help teachers to truly know their students and allow them to create a flexible approach to the curriculum which capitalizes on students' strengths and supports their needs. Advisors at every grade level monitor each student's academic and social development and also meet with his or her parents and other teachers throughout the school year. Learning specialists in each division partner with both teachers and parents to ensure various learning styles are supported. Within the classroom, teachers serve as guides and partners in the learning process, nurturing students while also holding them accountable to high expectations and encouraging them to challenge themselves. Mutual respect and trust are at the center of the relationship between

students and teachers, who are addressed by students on a first name basis. This process also serves as a model for relationships between students themselves, who support and uplift each other as peers. Students learn to work effectively with different personalities and to appreciate the unique talents and perspectives that others bring. In essence, relationships are at the very core of Calhoun's progressive pedagogy, as the collaborative and supportive atmosphere encourages students to take prudent risks without fear of failure.



**Learning By Doing.** A Calhoun education puts students in positions to discover knowledge and to make connections between subjects. At every grade level, the curriculum is interdisciplinary, multicultural, and rooted in learning by doing. At Calhoun, students do not simply study science, math, history, English, and art; rather they *are* scientists, mathematicians, historians, writers, and artists. The school capitalizes on children's natural curiosity from an early age. By providing hands-on opportunities within and outside of the classroom to engage with real-life issues, teachers cultivate students' intrinsic motivation to learn. Schedules in every division are designed with sufficiently long blocks of time to allow for deep inquiry as well as the flexibility necessary for excursions into the local community. Frequent day trips allow the school to take advantage of the wealth of historical, environmental, and cultural resources in New York. In addition, a number of overnight domestic and international trips and exchanges in Middle and Upper School extend the classroom curriculum. Outdoor educational opportunities promote multicultural understanding and foster friendships and bonds between

## CALHOUN At a Glance

**Founded:** 1896

**2015-16 Enrollment:** 750  
Upper School (9-12): 241  
Middle School (5-8): 210  
Lower School (PS 3's -4): 300

**Campuses:**

Main building at 81<sup>st</sup> Street (2-12)  
Robert L. Beir Lower School at 74<sup>th</sup> Street (PS-1)  
Calhoun Townhouse adjacent to main building

**Faculty:**

95 full-time faculty  
197 full- and part-time total faculty & staff

**Average Class Size:** 12-15

**Student-to-Teacher Ratio:** 7:1

**Tuition:**

Upper: \$45,540  
Middle: \$45,100  
Lower: \$27,450 - \$44,870

**Financial Aid:** \$5 million to 20% of students

**Budget:** \$36.5 million

**Endowment:** \$8 million

**Annual Fund:** \$1.2 million

students. As a result of Calhoun's experiential approach, students learn not only a wide range of important content but also how to question the significance or relevance of that content. They are encouraged to think critically, write clearly and persuasively, and devise creative solutions to complex problems.

### Sample Upper School Electives

Geometrical and Computer-Aided Design  
The History of the Future  
Disease and Society  
Outsiders in American Film  
Hunger and Homelessness  
Feminisms  
Multivariable Calculus  
Biology of Eastern Medicine  
Draw New York  
Environmental Justice  
Our City and Ourselves  
A Few Things About 1968  
Poetry Workshop  
Math in Sports  
Uses and Misuses of Scientific Evidence in Policy Making

**Process and Product.** Calhoun values both the process and the product of a robust and rigorous education. Learning how to learn is as important to success in college and life as the content that is studied. The school routinely highlights the importance of creatively exploring different ways to think about how to both pose and answer a question rather than simply rewarding a student for quickly getting to the right answer. This helps students discover and optimize how they learn best and in turn, deeply internalize and contextualize the material they are studying. In such an environment, students take true ownership of their education and this has the added benefit of promoting sound organization skills, positive study habits, and improved time management skills. Calhoun does not emphasize standardized testing as a measure of student academic achievement. Instead, teacher assessment focuses on a broader range of factors which include not only students' knowledge but also their unique ways of applying it. In the middle and upper divisions, students engage in self-assessment facilitated by faculty in order to reflect on their learning and be active participants in setting and achieving their goals. Families in all three divisions

receive comprehensive narrative assessments with detailed descriptions of their children's cognitive, social and emotional growth. Beginning in eighth grade and extending through high school, students continue to receive narrative assessments in addition to traditional letter grades and number grades that describe effort, motivation, and commitment.

Given the highly experiential and interdisciplinary nature of a Calhoun education, academic disciplines and co-curricular programs are best understood as parts of a whole rather than as isolated subjects. Detailed course descriptions and numerous examples of implementation are available on each division's homepage:

[Lower School](#) (PS 3's – 4<sup>th</sup> grade)

[Middle School](#) (5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)

[Upper School](#) (9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade)



**Lower School Snapshot: Study of Self and Community**

In their study of Self and Community, first graders design and create “pocket people”—six-inch fabric dolls—and build homes for them from recycled materials. The children collaborate and brainstorm as they consider what is needed for a community, and different groups create neighborhood sites such as a grocery store or a playground. Math is integrated as students weigh and measure their pocket people to make birth certificates, and the project also connects with language arts as students write stories about their pocket people. Finally, teachers guide students to consider the needs of various people in the community, which leads to a discussion of social justice and equity in preparation for the first grade food drive and visit to the local food pantry.

**Middle School Snapshot: Hack 'n' Hurl Catapult Challenge**

The seventh grade science curriculum focuses in part on developing students' basic knowledge of physics. Students break into small teams and use what they have learned about force, potential and kinetic energy, and other physics-related topics to design a catapult that hurls an object as far as possible. In addition to applying their current knowledge to the design and building of their catapults, students make discoveries through the process of trial and error and must collaborate effectively as a team. The project culminates when all of the teams participate in a special competition in the gym in front of a large portion of the Middle School student body, teachers, and parents. To add an extra element of creativity, students choose names and themes for their teams, complete with costumes and special entrance music! To see videos of this year's competitors, click [here](#).

**Upper School Snapshot: Junior Workshop**

Junior Workshop exemplifies the increasing agency that Upper Schoolers have in designing their own educations. Rather than asking students to report on something that already exists in the world, the aim of this twelve-week, independent, interdisciplinary project is to create knowledge, insight, beauty, and/or function. In fact, a faculty advisor notes that “all authentic inquiry is creative and all inquiry should be influenced by what already exists in the world (hence the need for research)—even if one's own product winds up being a reaction against what exists.” Examples of recent projects include a performance demonstrating the effects of music on the brain during a magic show, a new statistic that more accurately predicts how college basketball players will perform in the NBA, a podcast exploring theories of identity development in young people, and a re-design of Calhoun's fourth floor.



## The Arts

Calhoun students and teachers alike are musicians, actors, directors, writers, builders, painters, and more. The arts are considered as important as math, science, English, history, and other academic subjects, and they play a vital role at Calhoun as a prism through which to view the world and as a tool for creativity, self-exploration, and self-expression. The visual and performing arts are integrated seamlessly into all academic disciplines, an approach that makes the learning process more engaging and encourages collaboration, creative problem-solving, risk-taking, and making connections across fields. The arts are also a discrete part of the curriculum at all grade levels and, by Middle and Upper School, include a wide range of electives. Music offerings include courses in instrumental, choral, and chamber music, jazz improvisation, and lyric writing. Students become makers and hone their skills in visual arts classes like drawing, painting, weaving, fabric arts, woodwork, sculpture, and media arts. Theater courses such as acting, directing, playwriting, technical theater, and improvisation are increasingly student-led and student-produced in Upper School.



Not surprisingly, Calhoun benefits from its location in one of the nation's most arts-rich cities. Students enjoy access to world-class museums, music, and theater as part of the regular curriculum. In addition, the school's Performing Arts Series brings to campus professional performing artists and includes a TALK series of lectures and panel discussions.

### Sample Middle and Upper School Clubs

Model UN  
Kiva Club  
Diversity Club  
Student Government  
Sustainability Club

The Issue (student newspaper)  
Calhoun LP (music club)  
Yearbook  
Business and Entrepreneurship  
Chess Club

Math Mentors  
Dance Club  
Peer Tutors  
Comic League  
Kiva Club

## Athletics and Physical Education

In each division, the school's physical education and athletics programs promote confidence, cooperation, respect, leadership, and healthy living. Through physical education programs at

each level, students learn the fundamentals of a number of different sports, train in cardio, strength, and flexibility, and can also partake in electives such as yoga and dance.



Interscholastic athletics in seventh through twelfth grade provide students a unique opportunity to develop themselves as healthy, ethical, and disciplined individuals in the context of a team. Coaches at Calhoun strive to help student-athletes develop discipline, manage time, empathize with and encourage their teammates, test themselves under pressure, commit to something larger than themselves, learn resilience, set and reach goals, and be respectful of teammates, coaches, officials, and opponents. Indeed, for

Calhoun teams, these values and abilities are the primary purpose of the athletics program; winning is a goal but not the sole purpose. As many as 25 intramural and interscholastic teams are fielded each year. Students compete in volleyball, soccer, cross country, basketball, baseball, track and field, softball, and golf. In recent years, Calhoun athletes have won multiple championships in volleyball and basketball, including being Girls Varsity Volleyball NYCAL League or Co-League Champions four of past five years, Girls JV Volleyball NYCAL Co-League Champions in 2015, Boys Varsity Volleyball NYCAL League Champions in 2015, and Boys JV Basketball NYCAL Tournament Champions in 2013 to name just a few. The on-campus gymnasium and weight-training room are supplemented by a variety of nearby public spaces such as Chelsea Piers, Central Park, Van Cortlandt Park, and Icahn Stadium. Calhoun is a member of the New York City Athletic League (NYCAL) and the Private School Athletic Association (PSAA).

### **Community Service**

Community service and service learning programs support Calhoun's goal to foster compassion and respect and to help students understand their local and global responsibilities. Indeed, a sense of civic responsibility permeates the entire school culture. Grade-level, all-division, and all-school service programs are cherished traditions. Students in every division initiate and lead service clubs, social activism, and philanthropic efforts, and faculty, administrators, staff, and parents not only provide support and guidance but also are regular participants in service initiatives. The Service Learning program integrates with the curriculum at each grade level so that students make connections between their classroom learning and world beyond our walls.

Two of the most anticipated cross-age service traditions, Harvest Festival and Earth Day, provide opportunities for students to work in cross-divisional "cluster family" groups on community service and team-building activities. Previous Harvest Festival projects have

included making crafts that are donated to local hospitals or senior centers, writing letters to government officials in support of legislation, taking collections for food pantries, and fundraising for specific causes. Examples of service learning activities include a No Idling campaign developed by third graders to persuade parents, bus drivers and delivery vans to stop idling their engines and prevent air pollution, first graders' creation of a video about water conservation, and Cooper's Troopers Day of Service, which focused this year on street and pedestrian safety and advocacy.



### College Placement

Calhoun considers success in college to be a byproduct but not the sole purpose of an excellent education, and because its students have developed an intrinsic motivation to learn, they are well prepared to excel in the college of their choice. Graduates attend a wide range of renowned institutions, from small liberal arts colleges to large public universities to Ivy League schools. High-touch and student-driven, the college process begins during the junior year in a seminar that addresses common questions. The class is divided into smaller groups to allow for informal, open discussions. The college seminar continues into the senior year, when more immediate and specific issues about college interviews, essays, recommendations, and applications are covered. One of two senior college counselors is assigned to every student and meets individually with them on a regular basis to help them both define goals and identify appropriate colleges. The high level of personal attention students receive throughout the process both from the College Counseling Office and from faculty, staff, and administrators, who write personal and detailed recommendation letters, helps students get accepted to and ultimately attend the colleges or universities that are the best fit for their strengths, interests, and aspirations. A list of recent matriculations can be found online [here](#).



## Diversity and Equity

---

A school that genuinely values the rich diversity of the human experience, Calhoun strives to build an inclusive community that is representative of this diversity and to foster in students and adults alike a strong sense of empathy, equity, and justice. A nuanced understanding of this work as multidimensional and ongoing results in its being integrated into the entirety of the school, including the admissions and hiring processes, curricula and programs, professional development, community education and support, and school-wide conversations about civic and global responsibility. Race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic level, ability, family composition, gender identification, and sexual orientation are just a few examples of the lenses through which the school considers matters of diversity and equity. Calhoun embraces the sometimes-challenging work of openly acknowledging social inequities; discussing the ways in which they impact members of the school community, reflecting on the various biases, both personal and institutional, that impact perceptions of oneself and others, and creating mechanisms to support the varying needs of the Calhoun community and promote acceptance and engagement in a diverse society.

Partnerships with organizations such as A Better Chance, Prep for Prep, Early Steps, the TEAK Fellowship, and the Oliver Scholars Program help the school to attract and support students and families from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. Faculty, administrators, staff, and Upper School students participate in a number of off-site opportunities to grow their understanding of themselves and others. A range of parent and student diversity groups provide ongoing, on-campus support and education for Calhoun community members. Parent groups include Race Talk, Gender and Parenting, Parents of Color, Single Parenting, Touched by Adoption, and Race Talk, and student groups include the Lower School Students of Color Support Group, four Middle School racial identity groups, Upper School Students of Color and White Students Antiracist Groups, and the Upper School Pride Alliance. Detailed descriptions of these groups can be found online [here](#).

### Special Initiatives at Calhoun

A number of unique initiatives enrich the Calhoun experience and support the school's connections with the world beyond its doors. Click the links below for more information.

[School and Society](#)

[Performing Arts Series](#)

[Deconstructing Race](#)

[Sustainability](#)

[Eat Right Now](#)

[Green Roof](#)

[PEL Teaching Fellowship](#)

[Progressive Education Traditions](#)

## Parents

---



Calhoun views parent involvement not only as an integral part of carrying out its educational mission but also as a sign of a vibrant and healthy community. Parents can regularly be found volunteering in lower division classrooms and across all divisions, taking part in forums, workshops and attending special events. Teachers and parents enjoy positive, productive relationships and actively partner together in meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and physical needs. Calhoun's clarity and candor about its identity and philosophy during the

admission process result in a parent community that is strongly committed to the mission of the school. In addition, Progressive Education Traditions (PET), a six-part evening course for adults and Calhoun's Upper School students, furthers parents' understanding of and commitment to the progressive education tradition.

The Calhoun Parents Association (PA), of which all parents are automatically members, supports Calhoun's educational goals, facilitates communication between families and the school, and cultivates an inviting and warm social environment for all members of the community. The PA also raises money throughout the year to fund a number of causes such as faculty and staff parties, years-of-service awards, donations to the school or local organizations, and community building activities for Calhoun families.

## Facilities

---

In 1896, The Jacobi School opened in a brownstone on West 80th Street. Renamed The Calhoun School in 1924 in honor of Mary Edwards Calhoun, Headmistress from 1916 to 1942, the school was housed in several locations around the Upper West Side over the years until the current West 81<sup>st</sup> Street campus opened in 1975 to serve all three divisions. In the late 1980s, the Robert L. Beir Lower School building on West 74th Street was acquired to meet expanding enrollment needs and serve pre-kindergarten through first grade. Today at 74<sup>th</sup> Street, children enjoy large, bright classrooms, a library, a music room, a theater, and a rooftop garden. An outdoor terrace and gym provide students with ample space for programmed physical education classes and recreation, and older students frequent Central Park and Riverside Park, both within walking distance. Calhoun is also a member of the Black Rock Forest Consortium, and students have opportunities to work in this 3,838-acre "living laboratory" throughout the year.

The 2000s brought many changes to 81<sup>st</sup> Street, including the purchase of an adjacent five story brownstone to house administrative offices, the addition of four new floors and the Green Roof Learning Center, and most recently, a significant renovation that resulted in the creation of the Calhoun Commons, a mixed-use community space and dining hall, and a new Library Resource

Center. Today, Calhoun's main building serves students in second\* through twelfth grades. Each division has a dedicated floor, and disciplines are divided into separate seminar spaces in a largely open classroom format. In addition, this nine-story building includes a science center with three laboratories; an athletic center with a full-size gymnasium, locker rooms, and a weight-training room; a performing arts center with a theater and rehearsal rooms; a woodshop; art studios; and a photography and digital video center and darkroom.

\*Beginning in the 2016-17 academic year, second grade will be located in the 74<sup>th</sup> Street building.



## Finances

Calhoun has a \$36.5 million operating budget, \$5 million of which is earmarked for financial aid and tuition remission each year. A detailed financial plan, which tracks both operating functions and progress toward long-term goals, accompanies every strategic plan and has contributed to the school's ability to establish and execute efficient budgets while also continuing to expand and enhance its programs in key areas.

Tuition accounts for the majority of Calhoun's operating income, and the Annual Fund, Annual Benefit, corporate and matching gifts, auxiliary income, and an approximately 4.5% draw on the endowment comprise approximately 10% of revenue. Although the preschool has recently experienced a decrease in enrollment due to both demographic changes and competition from other local preschools, steady enrollment overall has been an important factor in Calhoun's financial stability. The school has benefited from a retention rate of approximately 89% over the past two years and an admissions yield averaging 40% for the past five years.

Significant facilities renovations and expansions over the past 15 years were made possible by successful capital campaigns and the use of long term financing by the school. In September

2013, Calhoun refinanced its debt which significantly reduced annual debt service to a level which is comfortably covered through the annual operating budget.

### Fundraising

The culture of philanthropy at Calhoun has grown significantly over the past decade, enabling the school to broaden its base of support particularly among current constituents. The Annual Fund has more than tripled the amount raised in the past decade and brought in over \$1.2 million in the 2014-2015 school year. In the same period, parent participation has increased from approximately 30% to 81%. In addition, the annual Benefit has steadily grown and, in 2014-2015, garnered over \$900,000. Approximately seven years ago, a major campaign that started as an effort to grow endowment evolved into a capital campaign to support facilities at 81<sup>st</sup> Street. This hybrid campaign ultimately raised approximately \$11 million. Calhoun is currently in the quiet phase of a campaign, with several seven-figure pledges already in hand.



### Governance

The Calhoun School is governed by a Board of Trustees currently comprised of 20 current or former parents, a number of whom are also alumni, and the Co-Presidents of the Parents Association, who serve as ex officio members. The Head of School is also an ex officio member of the board and is a voting member of most board committees. Trustees may serve up to three consecutive three-year terms, and the Committee on Trustees plans several years ahead for board succession and seeks recommendations from both the broader board and the school's senior administration as it considers both current and upcoming needs. The board operates through six standing committees: Finance, Development, Strategic Planning, Committee on Trustees, Audit/Risk Management, and Executive.

Calhoun's board has a sophisticated understanding of best practices in governance, which contributes to a relationship of mutual trust and respect both among board members and between the board and the head of school. The board continually educates itself, and each year a number of members attend the New York State Association of Independent Schools Trustees Governance Workshop. A new trustee orientation and at least one annual retreat are among other regular board education and training activities. Trustees also conduct an annual self-evaluation, the results of which are used to identify additional areas for board training as well as any emerging issues. Calhoun just successfully completed its ten-year reaccreditation process with NYS AIS, and in its report, the visiting committee acknowledged the overall health of

governance at the school, and in particular, the strong working relationship between the head of school and board leadership.

### The Opportunity

Steve Nelson, who has served as Head of School since 1998, will retire at the conclusion of the 2016-2017 school year. Nothing short of transformational, his tenure has included a reinvigorated commitment to progressive education and diversity, equity, and social justice; multiple facilities expansions and renovations; significant enrollment growth; dramatic increases in annual fundraising; and substantial increases in faculty compensation. Perhaps most of all, Steve will be remembered for his love of children and unwavering commitment to progressive education.

The Calhoun School approaches this leadership transition from a place of institutional strength and cultural health and is energized by the possibilities that lie ahead as it enters its next era. Particular opportunities and challenges that are among its current priorities include the following:

- **Leadership in progressive education.**

The needs and interests of the individual student, learning by doing, concern for the process of learning as well as the product, and a commitment to fostering engaged and empathetic citizens will remain at the heart of Calhoun's approach. At the same time, the school recognizes that it must continually evolve its programs in order to stay at the forefront of best educational practices. The next phase of the school's evolution will involve ensuring that appropriate infrastructure, systems, and accountabilities are in place to maintain consistency in its program while honoring faculty autonomy and the needs of individual students. Expanded emphasis on professional development, curriculum development, and vertical and horizontal collaboration across grades and divisions will further support Calhoun's continued success. In addition, Calhoun will need to find new and compelling ways to attract families and to continue to make the case for why the school's program stands out in a highly competitive independent school market.



- **Philanthropy.** Regularly rising tuition at independent schools throughout New York City increasingly limits the number of families who can afford Calhoun, a dynamic that not only presents a financial sustainability challenge but which also reduces the school's ability to serve students from a wide range of backgrounds. The endowment, while growing, is not yet at a level that will sufficiently alleviate the school's dependence on tuition. The coming years will require the continued growth of the school's culture of philanthropy and the execution of additional major campaigns in order to provide funds

for endowment and facilities. Particular goals will be both continuing to expand the school's donor base and ensuring that current donors are giving at their maximum capacity.

- **Facilities development and use of space.** Calhoun has benefited from rapid enrollment growth, particularly in the Middle and Upper Schools, over the past decade. While the larger population has enriched the community in many ways, it has resulted in increasingly limited space in its two urban campuses. Beginning in fall 2016, second grade will move to the 74<sup>th</sup> Street campus and fifth grade will become part of the Lower School. These changes were primarily driven by pedagogical considerations, but they also have the added benefit of allowing the school to better utilize all of the space at both campuses. In the coming years, Calhoun will continue to think creatively about its use of current space and to grow its campuses either through the acquisition of additional property or the addition of new stories on the 81<sup>st</sup> Street building.
- **Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.** Calhoun will continue its commitment to being a diverse community that fosters empathy and a sense of social responsibility within its members. In addition to strengthening its current programs, the school aims to better coordinate and expand discussions about identity, diversity, and equity to engage all community members and to ensure that this work is fully integrated rather than occurring in a silo. Other goals include increasing the diversity of families, faculty, staff, administrators, and board members, and ensuring that school policies and practices recognize and accommodate the variety of potential challenges that individual members of the community may face by virtue of their backgrounds.



## Responsibilities

---

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the Head of School is responsible for ensuring The Calhoun School meets its mission of inspiring a passion for learning through a progressive approach to education that values intellectual pursuit, creativity, diversity, and community involvement. He or she will embody and exemplify the school's values, ensure that academics and programs continue to thrive, and secure its financial and operational health. Areas of oversight and specific duties include the following:

- Championing the school's progressive approach and articulating its vision, values, and accomplishments to internal and external constituencies in order to attract new families

to the school, retain current families, promote a sense of common purpose, and raise philanthropic funds for the school's financial sustainability.

- Partnering with the Board of Trustees and other key constituents to set institutional priorities and develop and execute strategic plans that will promote the continued progress of the school and guarantee its long-term success.
- Ensuring that administrative systems and staffing and educational practices fully support students and faculty, encourage collaboration across disciplines and departments, and promote accountability and consistency of program quality within a framework of autonomy and flexibility.
- Collaborating with the Director of Finance and the Board of Trustees to develop and manage budgets, oversee the acquisition of new properties and expansions or renovations to current facilities, and steward resources in order to minimize tuition increases, grow the endowment, grow financial aid, and safeguard the short- and long-term financial health of the school.
- Overseeing the regular review and development of programs and practices and continually enhancing academics, arts, athletics, community service, and other offerings consistent with Calhoun's ethos of ongoing growth and reflection.
- Hiring, empowering, supporting, and mentoring faculty, administrators, and staff who are committed to a progressive approach to education and the holistic development of children and adolescents.
- Being a strong advocate for Calhoun's work in diversity and equity, including communicating the school's values and objectives to current and prospective families, creating strategies to increase the diversity of the community, and supporting new and existing education and support programs.
- Serving as a visible and engaged presence on both campuses and at school events, and maintaining productive and positive relationships with all constituents.
- Promoting a high level of transparency and communication between and among faculty, staff, parents, students, and board members.
- Fostering a joyous, dynamic, and egalitarian culture in which individuals are valued and respected for their unique contributions to the community and serving as a role model by exemplifying a love of learning, respect for diverse peoples and ideas, and civic responsibility and engagement.

### Candidate Qualities

---

In addition to inviting candidates with strong experience in independent school leadership, the Search Committee also wishes to consider "nontraditional candidates" with alternative backgrounds in such venues as higher education or public education, other not-for-profit organizations, finance, law, business, or public service so long as their experience, leadership skills, and values would allow them to lead and manage successfully within the context of a progressive independent school. Accordingly, the following candidate qualities are offered as general guidelines rather than strict requirements.

#### Leadership

- A person who engenders the confidence and excitement of all community members by virtue of his or her passion for progressive education and love of children and adolescents.
- A strategic thinker who anticipates future opportunities and challenges and balances leadership of an institution's culture and vision with the practical management and organizational skills necessary both to implement plans over time and to solve immediate needs.
- A leader who is at once charismatic and approachable and whose knowledge, experience, ability to understand the needs and motivations of a range of people, and compelling communication style allow him or her to create and sustain a sense of common mission.
- A manager who invites input from others with regard to major decisions, is comfortable with delegation, empowers faculty and staff, and holds students and adults accountable to high expectations.

#### Experience

- At least ten years of senior administrative and leadership experience in an educational setting such as an independent school or small college.
- A demonstrated track record of embracing progressive educational philosophy and practices, revising and developing curricula and programs, hiring faculty, administrators, and staff, and overseeing effective professional development and evaluation programs.
- Background working with board members and other senior administrators on strategic planning, fiscal management and budgeting, facilities development, and fundraising.

- Experience recruiting and working with employees and families from diverse backgrounds and supporting programs that promote equity and inclusion.

### **Skills and Knowledge**

- Excellent communication skills that enable her or him to make a compelling case for progressive education in general and Calhoun's approach and philosophy in particular in order to maintain enrollment, support fundraising, and foster shared values and vision.
- Organizational savvy, the ability to perceive connections between various parts of a complex system, and the ability to negotiate among the sometimes-competing claims that arise in an independent school.
- Strong business acumen, the ability to manage a budget efficiently, the capacity to understand both current financial realities and future projections, and experience with endowment building.
- The ability to blend a progressive approach to education, which honors students' individual needs and faculty creativity, with systems, staffing, and assessments that ensure consistency and accountability.
- Knowledge of child and adolescent development, strategies for meeting the needs of various learning styles, anti-oppressive pedagogy, and best practices in educational technology.
- A deep and nuanced understanding of teaching and learning that recognizes that progressive education and rigorous academics are not mutually exclusive, and the ability to support faculty and administrators in the regular evaluation and revision of curricula and pedagogy to ensure that Calhoun delivers an excellent program that is both supportive and challenging to all students.
- The ability to form meaningful relationships with children and adults of all ages and from various backgrounds.
- An understanding of one's own identities and biases and how they may impact one's perspectives and actions.
- An understanding of the dynamics of a complex and highly competitive independent school market.

### **Personal Attributes**

- An authentic, accessible, honest, and straightforward person.

- An educator at heart who loves and understands children, revels in their sense of wonder, and genuinely cares for their academic and personal growth, and who equally values the art of teaching and nurtures the development of faculty, administrators, and staff.
- One who embraces prudent risk as a natural part of the growth process.
- An open-minded individual who also possesses the courage of his or her convictions.
- A person of academic or scholarly accomplishment.
- An empathetic and fair person who exemplifies service and responsible citizenship.

#### Other Considerations

---

**Compensation:** Highly competitive with comparable institutions in the region.

**Education:** Advanced degree preferred.

**Website:** [www.calhoun.org](http://www.calhoun.org)

*The Calhoun School is committed to a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity for all employees and qualified applicants without regard to sex, race, color, religion, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or marital status.*

**For more information, contact:**

**L. Lincoln Eldredge and Jessica D. Cockrell**  
**Brigham Hill Consultancy**  
**214-871-8700**  
[cockrell@brighamhill.com](mailto:cockrell@brighamhill.com)  
[www.brighamhill.com](http://www.brighamhill.com)